

FLOW OF FAKE NEWS IN A DIGITAL AGE: REQUIREMENT OF COMMON GLOBAL EFFORTS AND MECHANISM FOR RESTRAIN

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ABSTRACT

The instantaneous flow of fake news using modern digital technologies has become one of the critical national and global security challenges. Fake news campaigners intriguingly distract people's sentiment and accomplish their vested interest. Covid-19 pandemic educates that the world community need to make proper national and global policy and mechanism to restrain the fake news. This paper concludes that to restrain fake news in a digital age, common efforts of the global community is necessary. Severe effect of fake news at the time of critical periods like Covid-19 help to disestablish the society and ignore scientific and accurate information. Major powers like US, Russia, China, EU, India need to initiate a pragmatic effort to make a broader consensus to formulate common policy and mechanism to counter the fake news. Irrespective of their ideological differences, major powers for a safe world need to form a common consensus for the global containment of fake news. National, regional and global initiatives against the fake news campaigners need to be harnessed. In a digital age, public awareness to detect fake information is also vital. The proper legal arrangement is necessary in every country to punish those who are involved in creating hurdles in society through fake news and disinformation. This research is qualitative in nature and structurally an explorative.

KEW WORDS: Fake News; Digital Age; Covid-19; Containment; Common Global Efforts & Mechanism

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INTRODUCTION

The digital world is an era of massive global interaction and intercourse on multiple fronts. Whether politicians or business community or academics, all segments are interconnected with increasing entanglement based on their interests, concern and requirement. The invention of modern communication technologies has created a radically different world in comparison to the previous century. Advancement of the modern communication system is a revolution to change entire lifestyle and intercourse of the human being. Constructive use of communication technology helps to modernize sectors like health, education, infrastructure and support to reduce poverty creating maximum opportunities. Japan, South Korea, China are among the nations to get huge advantages from modern digital system linking it with their national programs.

On one side, the digital world has supported creating a tangible environment for development, but on another side, misuse of digital technologies is increasing globally. The majority of countries of the world has been affected by misuse of the digital technologies. Misusers have used communication technologies to flow fake news and disinformation to fulfill malign interests diverting people's sentiments and understanding. At a time of Covid-19 pandemic, effect of the fake news has become one of the critical challenges to address the pandemic. National policymakers and global leaders have discussed this issue seriously, but still, except few countries and

organizations, the majority are not coming with a concrete strategy to restrain fake news. Donald Trump had further familiarized the term 'fake news' saying that fake news is fake news' (Los Angeles Times 2017). He attacked American mainstream media for not flowing accurate information to the people. "Fake News- A Total Political Witch Hunt", says Trump (2017). If we listen to the opinion of some communication experts, they said that to detect fake news, authoritarian countries have done more works rather than democratic ones. In a democracy, sometimes freedom of expression without responsibility become a hurdle to control the activities of the fake news campaigners. The interest of the fake news campaigners is to achieve parochial interest motivated by certain individuals or groups' grand design.

The covid-19 pandemic has educated the global community that the world still lacks the necessary solidarity, cooperation and consensus to put collective efforts to address destructive challenges like Covid-19. War of words between the US and China further complicated the situation by drawing World Health Organization (WHO) into a conflict. Donald Trump administration had rejected cooperation with global health body WHO blaming that it has worked on the interest of China. Joe Biden administration tries to assure the global community that the US is with them and will support to fight Covid-19. But as experts say, due to the slow-motion working style of the Biden, it will be hard to create a normal situation with eradicating the pandemic. Vaccine nationalism, national interest, unnecessary propaganda are the issues unfortunately the world seen at a critical time of the pandemic. This tendency has given confidence to the fake news campaigners to fulfill their parochial interest and divert people's sentiments from scientific and accurate information.

This paper concludes that a common global effort is necessary to restrain fake news. Only a national effort will not be sufficient to detect the strong voice of the fake news media. At a time of the digital era, national and global security strategies need to be reformed as per new growing challenges. Covid-19 pandemic educates us that human being needs to accelerate more solidarity and understanding to address common threats and challenges of the world. Fake news and disinformation are a serious threat to social order, peace and stability. Standing above the ideology and political approach, major powers need to begin a discussion to form a common consensus to make new solid policy and mechanism to restrain fake news. This paper further concludes that the global community with serious consideration need to work hard to create an environment for accurate and balanced news flow and information sharing. For it, if necessary, they have to formulate strict regulations for social and online media.

FAKE NEWS FOR PAROCHIAL APPEASEMENT

With the transformation brought by the advanced information technology, modality and method of dissemination of fake news have been changed. Former US President Donald Trump was one of the most influential global leaders to criticize many mainstream media of the US for flowing fake news and making people fool. For fake news, both small scale and big media corporations could be engaged to fulfill parochial interest. They make the deal with a politician, businessmen or other related stakeholders for flowing filthy, biased and fabricated news as per the give and take basis. There is not a specific definition of fake news. Generally, it is constructed by individuals who are concerned not with collecting and reporting information to the world, but rather with making a profit through false information or social media circulation imitating the style of contemporary news (Zimdars and McLeod 2020). Fake news producer never follows the basic principle and norms of journalism. "Fake news is neither CNN- regardless of its many faults- nor disagreement over particular assessments of information; rather, its unverifiable information rooted in an unreality that hinders our collective abilities to make sense of the world" (Ibid.).

Fake news would have a broad impact on a large part of the audience. At the digital age, when information is a very powerful tool, fake news effect backing to those who want to get huge fast profits through unethical, illegal and normless way. There are not proper methods of study of fake news circulation when different interest coincides and create entangle illusion. Expert Julie D'Acci (2004) recommend 'circuit of media study' method to know the interconnected domain of fake news and other various misinformation tools. Julie says that this model helps us to identify ideas, practices, discourses, contradict, context, influence and fake news texts too. Circulation and reception of fake news determine its impacts, generally says that it has more influential aspects than other value-based objective news. High access to the internet and new modern information technologies globally have given propaganda strategists for creating sophisticated conspiracy to appease short- and long-term goals. In the era of digital information, every account can be contested and undermined, every representation deconstructed, each proof fabricated and every theory converted into an intrigue and vice versa (Andrejevic 2020).

Post-truth term is getting more popularity in this politically volatile world. Political leaders paradoxically try to use abusive words against their opponents. Trump was one of the world leaders who made the term fake news even more popular blaming those media segments who are very critical to him. On Twitter, he wrote that 'Fake News- A Total Witch Hunt' (Trump 2017). Populist leaders don't want to listen to critical views from opponents whether they are opposition parties, media or other forces. They think that whatever they say people will follow it and no force could hurdle their power and existence. In the post-truth situation, trust and real consensus lose ground and facts don't have particular space (Davies 2016). This situation is agonistic for the promotion of democratic values and norms. When the disinformation and non-facts have got significant space on public debates or communication, it invites new kinds of conflicts on the societies obstructing established principles. Media value is killed without objectivity and accuracy. Fake news systematically increases the distrust of media and upsurges dissatisfaction among people.

For centuries, various types of misinformation have disturbed the national and global audience. The speed and volume of fake news is depending on the quality of modern technologies. With the dawn of the 21st century, due to the evolution of modern information technologies and its large access to the global citizen, the campaigners of misinformation and fake news have been very successful in manipulating the people. To address the new information and communication challenges, the time is ripe to formulate new international information and communication order (Sharma 2018). Political parties, business forms or other groups have been using the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) platform to appease their parochial interest. While misinformation is getting stronghold everywhere, unfortunately, respective governments are not seeming more serious on this critical issue. Even United States, whose big tech companies are misusing the norms and values of freedom of expression and democratic ethics, policy makers are not working hard to stop wrong-doing of the tech companies.

GROWING POPULISM AND DECREASING DEMOCRATIC NORMS

Since the last decade, populism has been taking strong ground in many countries of the planet. United States to India or Brazil to Hungary, populism got victory over liberal order even though populist figures attack the mantra of democratic norms and practices. For populist leaders, misinformation and fake news campaign are strong tools to hype their agendas and appease general people's sentiment. Political scientists have said that Brexit agenda came in front with popular politics. Populists have succeeded to bring their agendas on the front, influence the people and make the election result in their favor. Many countries of Europe are seeming to infect by popular movements where fake news contaminated the

information and truth. “As economies struggled and unemployment persisted, the groups and regions that failed to rebound lost confidence in mainstream parties and established institutions, fueling the populist upsurge that has upended U.S. politics, threatens the European Union, and endangers liberal governance itself in several of the newer democracies” writes Galston (2018).

Facebook has become a strong tool to share fake news. Due to the easy internet access in many parts of the world, a user can run the Facebook application easily. It does not mean that only Facebook is a source for extreme flow of fake news, there are many apps, but among them in terms of access, impact and influence, Facebook is very effective for sharing any type of information. For, populist and undemocratic groups, Social site like Facebook is a very useful tool to flow lie, fictional view and totally fabricated information. Since last year, European Union is taking bold steps concerning the huge flow of fake news and activities of Far Rights and other extremists’ groups misusing social media tools. Social inequality and lack of responsible leadership has given propitious ground for extremist groups to launch their programs. For them, weak organization and institutional set up, support to flow misinformation and fake. This situation is fracturing basic foundations of the democratic norms and institutional mechanisms.

Populists groups could come from formal political organs or out of political groups, but they success to establish political agendas in a front political place. Some observer opined that populism is an illiberal democratic response to undemocratic liberalism and it attack on weakness of the democracy (Mudde 2016). As already mentioned, populists mostly like to use social media and online news platform to flow their views, they are very cleaver to take advantages from growing frustration and distress of common people because of the government’s failure to maintain socio-political order and create opportunities to the youth population particularly. But sometime national majority ruling party create favorable environment based on populist agendas. Recent example is Hungary, which based on nationalism and other related nationalist agendas have made strong hold on power and change the laws and policies as per its nationalist agendas. Hungary’s constitutions ‘recognize the role of Christianity in preserving nationhood’ and talks of ‘promoting and safeguarding our heritage, our unique language and culture’ (The Fundamental Law of Hungary 2011). Observers studies that at the present digital age, rather than mainstream media, online and social media are very effective tools for populist groups to appease people’s mind as per their related interest.

Growing populism and optimum use of fake news to manipulate people is hindering the major pillars of liberal democracy. Some experts said that neo-liberal order, which has weakened the states apparatuses, is one of factors for making state weak and few rich people captures the nation’s resource. Even if we see the recent study about politics and financial crises of last 140 years, we can see the scenario of weaking of major political parties, growing strong hold of far-right parties, fragmentation, social-political polarization and fragile governing situation (Funke 2016). No need to describe much that this situation is enough to show the state’s capability to deal with the pertinent challenges, so the various forms of extremist groups have taken opportunity to rise in the various parts of the world. Populism is a great threat for a liberal democracy. If major advanced countries, still delay to regulate and make responsible to the social media and online platform no doubt these tools will further use to demoralize and also fracture the foundational norms of democratic values and systems.

THREAT ON NATIONAL SECURITY

Fake news and disinformation campaign have become one of the malicious security threats for a national security.

Misinformation and disinformation both are being targeted to create instability, instigate violence and build a disharmony in a society. Both political and non-political nature of disinformation campaign we can experience not only in the weak countries, even intensely in the advanced countries like US, UK, France and many other. Many things have been written about US election of 2016 and Brexit where many says that role of disinformation was strong to create illusion and manipulate the people's sentiments. After the Manchester terrorist attack of 2017, some groups had circulated many fake news which further increased tensions (Vasu et.al. 2018). "Readers are overwhelmed by the flood of information, but older markers of veracity have not kept up, nor has there been a commensurate growth in the ability to counter false or fake news. These developments have given an opportunity to those seeking to destabilize a state or to push their perspectives to the fore" (Ibid.). These forces assume that in an unstable situation, state apparatus couldn't work properly, people are in a frustrating mood, so fake news media can easily launch a campaign to fulfill parochial interests and agendas.

At today's new global scenario and innovation of modern information technologies, the arena and definition of national security need to be studied in a broad spectrum. Now national security periphery is not only limited to a certain boundary but due to the ICT, there are many external forces which anytime could hamper or disturb major pillars of national security. Whether liberal democracies or authoritarian regimes, both are facing deep challenges created by the misuse of ICT by certain groups and individuals. Social media and online platforms have become strong basis to launch massive campaigns. There have been loud voices on that major Tech companies of the world due to their one-point interest of high profit generation are ignoring social responsibility, norms and issues related to national security. Tech companies have gone very far and now very powerful to manipulate or demonstrate strong hold over any national and external institutions. Except for European Union, other national, regional or international institutions have not done shown much seriousness to restrain unlimited power of tech companies which are major sources for dissemination of disinformation, misinformation and fake news. So, it has emerged a new type of dangerous national security threat manipulating and negatively diverting people's sentiments.

The new administration in the White House led by Joe Biden has given a rational hope to boldly fight against populism and use of social and online media to disseminate lies and hatred. But many still doubt that the Biden administration would come with solid rules to bring tech companies into a boundary of norms and responsibility. There have been many studies on the impact of fake news on the election outcome, political influence and attitude building particularly after 2000. Among them, one study finds that fake news affects an audience's political views if they feel that the information expressed were related to the political sphere (Balmas 2012). But studies are with multiple results. Some say that fake news consumption affects political results, but some say that it could have multiple results as per the audience's capacity to filter the news. When fake news and disinformation begin to challenge the basic foundation of a political system, then not only state apparatus but also individuals need to be worry to resist this movement. Fake news transmission can't come from rational and value-based intention. It just wants to create hurdles on existing social order by creating fear, hatred or sometimes unrealistic hope.

Still, most governments around the world have not shown the necessary willingness and seriousness to resist the malign flow of fake news. Even their security agencies are saying and giving critical warnings about the effects of fake news on the critical interest of the national security of the nation, respective governments have not launched any solid policies or actions to detect fake news with making common people more aware of it. Some European countries like France, Germany and Hungary have done little more against the fake news and disinformation campaign. Last year,

European Union had also taken some strict actions against Facebook and other tech giants aiming to oblige them to be more responsible and don't become the flexible medium for anti-social groups. If proper actions won't have taken against fake news, no doubt that it will hamper the basic foundations of national security strengths.

THREAT FOR LIBERAL VALUES

Many studies have shown that fake news would have fast and deeper effects on the public mind. These studies also tell that due to fake news, trust in mainstream media is decreasing around the world. "Moreover, conservatives are specially to associate the mainstream media with the term fake news and these perceptions are generally linked to lower trust in media, voting for Trump for Trump, and higher belief in conspiracy theories" (Linden et.al. 2020). Actually, proponents of fake news are very clear on their interests, but unfortunately, those who need to restrain these anti-social campaigns still seem not much active. Mainstream media in many societies have lost credibility due to their link-up with elite groups. People blame them that they have left the basic principle of journalism, so fake news have got space in society. Some research has displayed ideological-asymmetries in the flow of misinformation (Jost et al., 2018).

There are various aspects of the interpretation of liberal values. Western intellectual circles are highly divided on the major norms of the liberal approaches. After the demise of the Soviet Union in 1989, neo-liberal approach has taken strong hold on policy formulation and execution. Now many political scientists are saying that neo-liberal approach has crippled the fundamental values of democracy and liberal approach. It provides a great environment for the market and particularly support for a few business elites. These elites have run the big media houses, online platform and other information technology apparatus. First concept of fake news and disinformation not actually evolved from small media groups but from the big media houses who misused value for their business profits. Later on, when the world enter into the internet world, many people around the world got the opportunity to engage on social media platforms to share their views and perspectives.

Some research shows that fake news and disinformation have given a golden opportunity for an extremist group whatever of any group to obstruct liberal values and principles. The largest democracy USA has been no exception in this case. The majority of American academics, media persons and civil rights activists accused Russia of flowing fake news in the 2016 Presidential election in the favor of Donald Trump. But still, no evidence was found to support this narrative and accusation. Trump himself blame mainstream media for disseminating maximum fake news to divert the reality, fact and truth. This situation clearly shows that even US democracy is also not safe from the malign effect of fake news and disinformation. Most American liberal political scientists have frequently raised the effect of fake news on the future of liberal values. Example of *QAnon* movement in USA is enough how extremist groups are using mainstream and social media platforms to win public sentiment and create an environment of fear in the societies. "Americans are now witnessing a new era of conspiracy mongering and fake news via the rise of the fringe "QAnon" movement, among a plethora of paranoid claims that Covid-19 is an elite-fueled hoax and that it was secretly created by powerful people working in the shadows (Dimaggio 2020).

Outside of the activities of extremist groups in America, American societies have been compelled to indulge with a flow of disinformation about the Covid-19. Fake news succeeds to fracture American political discourse on the critical issue of Covid-19. Liberal democracy does not mean that you can share anything irresponsibly. It is bound by principles, ethics and values. Without these pillars, liberal democracy becomes fractured. But American modern institutions have

seemed uncaredful to restrain disinformation and fake news which strike on basic pillars of liberal values. Big tech companies Facebook, Twitter, Google and many others are established in US, not at the other place on the planet. Social media ecosystem and online platform has derailed the positive vibe of politico-social-cultural norms of the many countries of the world. Tech companies have gone too far. They have become a strong force in advanced democratic countries to influence political-economic power. Until and unless, these companies are not regulated or bring in a proper ethical standard, no doubt that in the coming days, fake news and disinformation campaigners will further destroy the remaining power, values and pillars of the liberal democracy.

Tech-giant companies have supported to create dangerous ground for spreading fake news in every corner of the globe. Relatively, people of democratic countries are more affected by fake news and disinformation campaign. Autocratic nations impose strict measures to stop public information and restrict freedom of speech. So, in comparison to the democratic countries, autocratic countries have faced less challenges of fake news in their soil, but problem is that autocratic government own-self don't provide the right information to its people. It only disseminates information which is good for its regime and try make people loyal to the regime. In the fear of punishment by opposing the information of autocratic government, people in most cases don't resist, just listen and be silent. But in liberal democracies, individual's right to information and freedom of expression is guaranteed by the constitution. That's why in the name of freedom of speech, social and online media companies intentionally providing ground for disinformation. They don't care security and order of the society. "People, organizations, and governments- foreign governments and even our own- use fake news for two different reasons. First, they intensify social conflict to undermine people's faith in the democratic process and people's ability to work together. And second, they distract people from important issues so that these issues remain unresolved (Office of Director of National Intelligence 2017).

Still, most of the liberal democracies' ignorance on regulating tech giants and social media platforms is really astonishing. More illustrations are seen at the Covid-19 pandemic. Many groups in many countries particularly in liberal democratic countries, have flowed huge levels of fake news about the Covid-19. Ironically, these governments have not done the necessary works to restrict these malign attempts. Liberal democracy is based on certain principles, values and norms. Being flexible in nature, there are also high possibilities of misuse of liberal values. At a time of digital age, liberal democracies have faced new kinds of challenges which came with misusing democratic rights. And on another side, the enemies of liberal values have got the opportunity to use digital platforms easily and campaign misinformation and fake news to create negative connotations about liberal values and democratic countries. These groups try to show that liberal democracy makes weak your government, society and in the name of democracy few people use privilege to dominate the masses. Acknowledging this reality challenge, it is vital time for liberal governments to take proper actions to regulate digital platforms and compel them to become responsible for flowing objective and accurate information.

FAKE NEWS ON COVID-19 SITUATION

With the outbreak of the Covid-19 at the end of 2019, the quantity and scale of fake news are comparatively very high rather than good and accurate information about new severe diseases (Sharma 2020). Online and social media have on one side played a positive role in to flow of useful information about Covid-19, but due to the huge misuse of online and social media, the global masses have been suffered from the lack of accurate medical information. Fake news has a long history but with the development of modern communication technologies, it became more powerful and fast. Now, most of the country of the world has little or more internet access to their people. It becomes easy to convey and receive entire global

information through the smartphone. It experienced that even until the end of 2020, conspiracy theories, unnecessary negative propaganda, non-scientific message flow and politically motivated news or view about Covid-19 were very high globally. The US is one of the highly divided societies on tackling Covid-19 in the world.

Joe Biden administration has many domestic limitations to take bold steps on both fronts- internal and external. US is a country in a world where public trust in media is very low. A divided society based on color, value, norms, history and identity can't prevail peace, harmony and proper order in a nation. In this very context, unnecessary interest groups take advantage to divert public attention with flowing the massive fake news. One of the strong points of fake news is that it has the capacity to attract large mass and flow and share in a very speed in comparison to truthful information. Social media corporations put little effort to restrain disinformation because they earn more from the massive flow of fake information. This issue becomes critical on how and in which process regulation on social and online media be maintained. Debates are started globally, but every country has been experienced different scenarios and obstacles.

Fake News creates confusion among the mass. The majority of the masses doesn't have the proper skill to filter overflow of the information. "With Covid-19, the amount of Fake News has increased substantially and has generated situations that negatively impact public health in multiple regions of the world. We are not only struggling with the virus but with an important infodemic based on ignorance and misinformation" writes experts Diego Carrion-Alvarez and Perla X. Tijerina-Salina (2020). These kinds of malign campaign against the scientific evidence have expanded large disinformation. Due to the impact of the fake news, people of the highly industrial societies of Europe are also divided between the interpretation of Covid-19, its effect and the use of vaccines. In Europe, France has the highest percentage of unsure about the use of Covid vaccine (Ibid.).

One of the reasons behind the massive expansion of fake news is easy access to digital technologies, which support creating huge platforms and networks globally. Fake news fast expands among the social networks, and it pollutes the communication process and promotes procedures which are against the health protocols and guidelines (Neto, et. all. 2020). Latin American country Brazil is among the countries to have struggled with fake news about Covid-19. Civil activists blamed the Brazilian government for not taking necessary measures to restrain fake news. Common Brazilian people due to the lack of proper knowledge about new diseases have suffered through fake news, which hampered the proper address of the Covid-19 (Ibid.). Negative news has the clout to attract mass in comparison the positive news. So that fake news campaigners feel champion on their malign mission. Fake news has provoked antagonism and falsehood to destroy the ideal political discourse (Farkas and Schou 2018).

In the new digital context of the present world, to restrain the negative use of the digital platform and hamper or misguide society, a new pragmatic policy is required. The covid-19 catastrophic situation has given a stout message to the world that how severely fake news can divert the issue with creating confusion among the mass. It seems that comparatively, authoritarian governments have done a good job to counter fake news and flow accurate medical information about the Covid-19. But the most of the democratic countries have failed to prepare necessary policies and regulations to handle the new digital platform, consequently, anarchists and anti-social cliques got opportunities to enlarge their malign campaign.

GLOBAL EFFORTS AND MECHANISM TO RESTRAIN

The Covid-19 crisis shows the real internal strength of the countries on immediately address the situation. The revelation

about the capability of national institutions, infrastructure, materials and action-oriented policies of the nation to deal with Covid-19 signals that extreme majority countries of the world are not doing better work for real reform of their country. "With related policy interventions dependent on variable evidence, pandemics require governments to not only consider the input of experts but also ensure that science is translated for public understanding," writes Kris Hartley and Minh Khuong Vu (2020) in the research paper. This new scenario says that proper global efforts and the common consensus are necessary to counter the fake news and disinformation, which undermine the scientific facts, evidence and accuracy. Health issue is a sensitive issue and this issue cannot be left only in the national context.

Since the outbreak of the pandemic, the World Health Organization (WHO) is flowing accurate and scientific information to make global people aware of the new severe disease. WHO has formed the Information Network for Epidemics which aimed to flow accurate information and counter the myth and misinformation. It has cooperated with many media and social media to restrain fake news through disseminating scientific information about the pandemic (UN Covid-19 Response 2020). To assess the Covid-19 related 'disinfodemic' of falsehoods and misinformation, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has published two important policy briefs. With taking supports of the working journalists worldwide, it aimed to observe the situation and if necessary, take actions to counter the disinformation about the pandemic.

Since the beginning of the outbreak of the pandemic, WHO has been faced tough political intended pressure. Particularly, US accused WHO of working for the interest of China. Donald Trump administration formally announced to out from WHO membership. It was a brutal act of superpower country against solidarity and cooperation to fight with global common threat. One important thing the latest pandemic teaches to the world is that still the world is not interconnected properly and they have less solidarity to address global challenges. It is sunshine that without deep solidarity and consensus of the global community, each country can't tackle the severe global challenges. The pandemic also shows that how even the advanced economy is ill-prepared to fight the challenges like a pandemic. US, UK, France, Italy, India, Brazil and many other countries are an example of great failure on preparedness to counter the pandemic.

Role of scientists can have powerful mechanism to address misinformation. They can help media persons or journalists with fake checks and provide accurate information. One thing is that due to the lack of minimum information about the medical terms and information, many journalists are failing to report accurately and inform people in the right way defeating flow of the fake news. Data scientist Jevin West said that scientists need to help journalists, policy makers for making accurate report and plan, and help to improve public knowledge and understanding of the pandemic, which support to save lives (Fleming 2020). At a critical health situation, there could not be a strong voice like of medical experts than others. We can take the example of America. In America, the majority of the people rejected medical protocols suggested by experts. So, America experienced a huge catastrophe. But in China, Japan, Korea and other countries pandemic didn't affect more due to the people's support with following guidelines and suggestions of the medical experts.

US need to leave the approach that it can address the present global complexity alone. Pandemic has shown that even to address internal structural problems, US has to do a lot. Global cooperation, solidarity and consensus is necessary to build the world a better and safe place. Misuse of digital technologies and social media become the most complex issue of the present time. It is coupled with national and international security, and finally to make the people aware to create order in the society. Major powers have to think from a scientific perspective to build broader consensus on how and in which way effectively than can cooperate to address the common challenges. Studies have also told that if there is

necessary cooperation globally, even invisible enemies like Covid-19, could be tackled on time without giving way to expand to a larger territory. The global community are asking for a more responsible role from major powers to commit and fight together against the common threats and make broader consensus to detect fake news and disinformation which are another destructive virus for global peace and stability. Every country needs to formulate policy and legal arrangements to punish those who try to create disorder in society through fake news and information. Combine efforts from national, regional and global sectors could be effective to detect fake news campaigners in a digital world.

CONCLUSIONS

Though the digital era has created a broader platform for communication and network on the planet, similarly misuse of technologies and social and online media has become a great headache for governments. Some countries have taken necessary measures to counter but the majority of nations have been experiencing tough tasks. This issue become a hot topic before global leaders while the Covid-19 pandemic has created a difficult circumstance in the major economies and fake news has further instigated the situation creating confusion, ignorance and dilemma among the people. Academicians have raised this issue seriously for a long time but politicians and concerned officials of the nation have not given importance to it until they saw malign hurdles at a time of pandemics created by fake news and misinformation. Some experts are mentioning that the internet platform has supported authoritarian governments to tighten their control (Coleman 2017). Most people don't have an idea to filter the news and receive it at a time of overflow of the news and information. Fake news promoter takes the opportunity from less-knowledge and ignorance of the common people.

The fake news and disinformation created fear and confusion since the outbreak of the pandemic. It misguided and divert the public sense fast flowing information ignoring scientific facts and accuracy. The propagandists of the fake news are champion to play with public sentiments. They use various tactics to attracts public attention. The majority of common people don't have an idea how to filter the news and information and be safe from fake news and disinformation. Paradoxically, in the present digital world, people are more engaged with social media for news and information. The power of mainstream media is reducing globally; it is also a reason why fake news propagandists got broad platform to appease their vested interest. Media experts are saying that people have less concern on mainstream media in the current world. Mainstream media lose their space, trust and strength as they had before due to their own mistakes, approach and anti-common people agendas. World Health Organization gave the term 'infodemic' about the spread of fake news and says that the spread of fake information and data could have a severe impact on people's wellbeing (PWC 2020).

When the fake news became a serious hurdle to fight with Covid-19, some nations of the United Nations have taken initiative aiming to make a collective framework to counter the fake news propagandists. Taking seriously the effect of the fake news, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres says "the world is seeing a 'dangerous outbreak of misinformation about harmful health advice, hate speech and wild conspiracy theories and antidote to this pandemic of misinformation is fact-based news and information" (Economic Times 2020). Though this effort is not properly launched, there is no alternative to the collective approach and efforts to counter the overflow of fake news. Misuse of the digital platform has been common in every corner of the globe. Interestingly, the digital platform has no certain boundary. Particularly major industrialized countries and international organizations need to make a common consensus and launch joint programs to counter fake news and disinformation.

This paper concludes that to restrain fake news in a digital age, common efforts of the global community is necessary. Severe effects of fake news at a time of pandemic like Covid-19 help to disestablish the society and divert people's sentiment in a wrong direction ignoring scientific and accurate information. Major powers like US, Russia, China, EU, India need to initiate a pragmatic effort to make a broader consensus to formulate common policy and mechanism to counter the fake news. Irrespective of their ideological differences, major powers for a safe world need to form a common consensus for globally restrain of the fake news. National, regional and global initiatives against fake news campaigners need to be harnessed. In a digital age, public awareness to detect fake information is also vital. The proper legal arrangement is necessary for every country to punish those who are involved in creating hurdles in society through fake news and information.

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